



Town of Lexington - FY 2018-FY 2022 Capital Improvement Projects

Project Name: Willard's Woods and Wright Farm Meadow Preservation **Date:** 02-Sep-16
Project ID Number: 1016 **Revision Date:** 20-Oct-16
Submitted By: Jordan McCarron **Department:** Land Use, Health and Dev **Priority:** 1
First Year Submission? ☐ **Phone #:** 781-698-4505 **E-mail:** jmccarron@lexingtonma.gov

Description of Project:

Of the approximately 1,400 acres of conservation land owned and managed by the Conservation Commission, approximately 65 acres are upland meadows. These conservation meadows provide important wildlife habitat as well as recreational opportunities, scenic enjoyment, and a connection to Lexington's agricultural history.

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Natural Heritage and Endangered Species program has identified open grassland and meadow improvement as a statewide priority for land management. Meadows pose a land management challenge because they require annual mowing and maintenance to remain open and free of invasive species; when left untended for even short periods of time, they quickly revert to shrub-land and forest and become difficult to maintain. Additionally, meadow edges are particularly difficult to maintain due to the challenge of mowing close to fences, stone walls, and tree lines.

Many of Lexington's meadows have had minimal maintenance since they were acquired, resulting in the following management and public health concerns:

- The advancement of invasive plants around meadow edges and throughout the meadows themselves, including Asiatic bittersweet, multiflora rose, and poison ivy.
- The loss of historic stone walls and vistas, as they are overgrown by vegetation.
- The invasion of meadow habitat with shrubs and trees, particularly along fences, stonewalls, boundaries, field trees, and where mowing has not taken place.

This project proposal is part of a multi-year Conservation Meadow Preservation Program. In FY2105 and FY2016, Hennessey Field and Joyce Miller's Meadow were restored and preserved. This year's project proposal consists of restoring, preserving and protecting approximately 20 acres of conservation meadow at Willard's Woods and Wright Farm so that they provide scenic places for passive recreation, enhanced wildlife and plant habitat, and a revived connection to Lexington's history through the recovery of stone walls and scenic vistas. The meadow restoration and preservation program uses the following objectives:

- Reclaiming meadow land that has been overgrown by shrubs, trees, and vines.
- Restoring and preserving views of stone walls, which serve as historic resources for Lexington's agricultural past.
- Managing invasive species encroachment on the field edges and throughout meadows.
- Providing an improved annual mowing and maintenance regime that promotes native vegetation, enhanced wildlife habitat, and safe recreational opportunities.

Justification/Benefit:

-Restoration of scenic vistas: Scenic views into conservation meadows improve the aesthetic quality of our conservation properties and may actually increase property values in the neighborhoods where these fields are located. Additionally, in many cases scenic views were part of the original purpose of the Town's purchase of the land.

-Wildlife habitat protection: The Massachusetts Audubon Society 2013 "State of the Birds" breeding bird report has identified more than 15 bird species whose local populations are waning due to a regional decline in grassland habitat. Additionally, removing invasive species and promoting natural meadow species will improve habitat for mammals, butterflies, and other invertebrates as well. A statewide habitat assessment conducted by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program has identified a decline in open grassland and mature forest habitat. Willard's Woods and Wright Farm provides both these habitat elements, although the meadow habitat has been severely compromised through lack of field edge maintenance.

-Restoration of stone walls: Stone walls are an important historic resource and provide a link to Lexington's agricultural past.

-Restoration of passive recreational opportunities: Meadows offer important local recreational opportunities, such as bird-watching, walking, cross-country skiing, and picnicking.

-Community Engagement: Restoring scenic views and maintaining open meadows will generate renewed interest in conservation and may result in increased participation in volunteer conservation efforts coordinated by the Conservation Office.

In addition, Wright Farm was purchased with CPA funds in part to preserve the historic and pastoral views of its fields along Grove Street; this project would enhance and protect this investment.

Impact if not completed:



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-Conservation meadows and the scenic views, passive recreational opportunities, and native vegetation and wildlife habitat that they provide, will continue to deteriorate.
 -Roadside vistas into meadows will continue to fall into disrepair due to the growth of trees and shrubs, loss of stone walls, and continued colonization by invasive species.
 -Neighbors and visitors to conservation areas will become disinterested and unsupportive of future conservation efforts due to apparent lack of management of properties that the Town has invested in.

Timeframe:

This project will begin in the fall of FY2018 and conclude in the fall of FY2019 to accommodate time of year to implement scope of restoration work.

Replace. Freq:

0 Years

Stakeholders:

-Conservation Division Staff
 -Conservation Stewards
 -Conservation Commission
 -Lexington citizens who use any of Lexington's conservation meadows
 -Abutters to conservation meadows
 -Local wildlife

Operating Budget Impact:

Annual mowing expenses. \$1,600

Cost Analysis:

Funding Source: ☐ Levy ☒ CPA ☐ Revolving ☐ State Aid ☐ Water ☐ Sewer ☐ Recreation ☐ Private ☐ Other

Capital Funding Request

Recurring Cost

\$1,600.00

Maintenance Cycle

1 Years

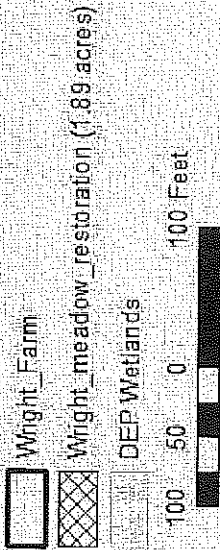
1016	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Totals
Site Acquisition	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Design/Engineer	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Construction	\$35,200	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$35,200
Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Contingency	\$5,280	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,280
Totals	\$40,480	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$40,480
CPA Amt. Req.	\$40,480	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

CPA Purpose
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Open Space
<input type="radio"/> Recreation
<input type="radio"/> Historic
<input type="radio"/> Housing

Basis of Cost Projection:




The cost projection for this project is based on cost estimates received from professional restoration specialists, namely Heritage Fields, and the experience of Conservation Office Staff. Heritage Fields' estimate is based on a day-rate of \$1,200.00

Wright Farm Meadow Restoration FY18



Data provided by the Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (Mass GIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, and the Town of Lexington.
NOTE: This map is not intended for planning purposes and is only approximate; it is intended to show the location of parcels and natural resources in Lexington.

Willard's Woods Meadow Restoration




-  ww_north_meadow_existing (7.32 acres)
-  ww_north_meadow_proposed (5.33 acres)
-  Willard's Woods

200 100 0 200 Feet



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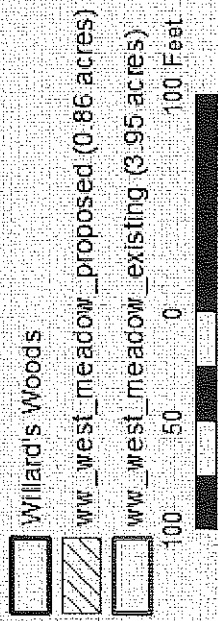
Willard's Woods Meadow Restoration

-  Willard's Woods
 -  ww_south_meadow_existing (4.43 acres)
 -  ww_south_meadow_proposed (2.71 acres)
- 150 75 0 150 Feet



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